Claims

What is claimed is:

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- 1. A method of bonding an image to a surface comprising the steps of
 - printing the image onto an image-receiving substrate;
 - applying a first side of an adhesive layer onto the image;
 - securing a backing layer to a second side of the adhesive layer to prevent bonding of the second side to an unintended object;
 - detaching the backing layer from the second side after the first side has been applied to the image;
 - contacting the second side to the surface; and
 - removing the image-receiving substrate to leave the image bonded to the surface.

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- 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the securing step is performed before the applying step.
- 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the first side of the adhesive layer is printed onto the image.

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- 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the image is reverse-printed onto the image-receiving substrate.
- 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the image-receiving substrate is a substantially transparent polymeric film.
 - 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the image-receiving substrate is coated with a release-finish, the image being printed onto the release-finish.
- 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the release-finish is a breakaway-coating that remains fastened to the image when the image-receiving substrate is removed.

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- 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the release-finish is a release-coating that remains fastened to the image-receiving substrate when the image-receiving substrate is removed.
- 9. The method of claim 7 wherein the total thickness of the breakaway-coating, image and adhesive bonded to the surface is less than about 5 mils.
 - 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the total thickness of the breakaway-coating, image and adhesive bonded to the surface is less than about 3 mils.
 - 11. The method of claim 8 wherein the total thickness of the image and adhesive bonded to the surface is less than about 5 mils.
 - 12. The method of claim 8 wherein the total thickness of the image and adhesive bonded to the surface is less than about 3 mils.
 - 13. The method of claim 1 further comprising the additional step of coating the image bonded to the surface with a clear-coat.
 - 14. The method of claim 11 wherein the clear-coat is a liquid.
 - 15. The method of claim 11 wherein the thickness of the adhered image and the clear-coat combine to substantially eliminate any tactile discernment of any edge on the surface.
 - 16. The method of claim 1 wherein the second side of the adhesive layer has low tackiness.
- 17. The method of claim 1 further comprising, between the contacting and removing steps, the step of applying pressure to the image-receiving substrate to facilitate adhesion to the surface.

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- 18. The method of claim 1, wherein the surface is a vehicle surface.19. The method of claim 18, wherein the surface is an automobile surface.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the surface is a building structure surface.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the surface is a airplane surface.

- 22. The method of claim 21, wherein the surface is a wall surface.
- 23. The method of claim 21, wherein the surface is a ceiling surface.
- 24. The method of claim 6, wherein the image, image-receiving substrate, release-finish and adhesive layer are mutually insoluble.
- 25. A transferred graphic indelibly bonded to a surface, comprising a composite of an image having outer and inner sides and an adhesive secured between the inner side and the surface, and a clear-coat overlying the composite and the surface.
- 26. The transferred graphic of claim 25 wherein the composite has a breakaway-coating affixed to the outer side of the image.
- 27. The transferred graphic of claim 25 wherein the total thickness of thecomposite and clear-coat is less than about 5 mils.
 - 28. The transferred graphic of claim 27 wherein the total thickness of the composite and clear-coat is less than about 3 mils.
- 30 29. The transferred graphic of claim 26 wherein the total thickness of the composite and clear-coat is less than about 5 mils.

- 30. The transferred graphic of claim 29 wherein the total thickness of the composite and clear-coat is less than about 3 mils.
- 31. The transferred graphic of claim 25, wherein the ink image is comprised ofmultiple inks applied in succession to create a multi-colored image.
 - 32. A graphic transfer sheet comprising:
 - an image-receiving substrate having first and second sides and a releasefinish on the first side;
 - an image applied to the release-finish;
 - an adhesive layer affixed to the image, the adhesive layer and image having a combined thickness less than about 5 mils; and
 - a backing layer secured to the adhesive layer,

whereby the graphic transfer sheet is used to transfer and secure the image and adhesive layer, substrate-free, to a surface.

- 33. The transfer sheet of claim 32 wherein the image-receiving substrate is a transparent polymeric film.
 - 34. The transfer sheet of claim 33 wherein the polymeric film is polyester.
- 35. The transfer sheet of claim 32 wherein the adhesive is a pressure-sensitive acrylic adhesive.
- 36. The transfer sheet of claim 32 wherein the backing layer is smooth polyester.
- 37. The transfer sheet of claim 32 wherein the release-finish is a release-coating that adheres more strongly to the image-receiving substrate when the image and adhesive layer are transferred to the surface.

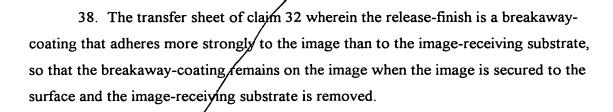
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- 39. The transfer sheet of claim 38 wherein the combined thickness of the adhesive layer, image and breakaway-coating is less than about 5 mils.
- 40. The transfer sheet of claim 32 wherein the combined thickness of the adhesive layer and image is less than about 3 mils.

41. The transfer sheet of claim 39 wherein the combined thickness of the adhesive layer, image and breakaway-coating is less than about 3 mils.

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